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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0491  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5555  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3225  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1412  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1386  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2375  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4065  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2670  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 3065  
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1237  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002014

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, DRL, DRL/AWH, DRL/IRF  
NSC FOR E. PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: MUSLIM MILITANTS CONVICTED FOR ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM RALLY

REF: A. JAKARTA 1593  
[1](#)B. (03) JAKARTA 8737

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Two hard-line Muslim militant leaders who led a June 1 attack against a peaceful religious freedom rally were convicted of inciting violence and other crimes in an October 30 verdict in Central Jakarta Court. The 18-month prison sentences handed down sent a clear law enforcement message against vigilantism and were praised by human rights activists. Hundreds of hard-liners clashed with police near the court following the verdict but police quickly dispersed them. Credit for the prosecutions goes to the Yudhoyono administration which pressed the cases. END SUMMARY.

#### CONVICTIONS

[1](#)2. (C) Two well-known Indonesian extremists have been convicted of crimes. Rizieq Shihab, leader of the Islamic Defender's Front (FPI), and co-defendant Munarman (one name), head of the Islam Troop Command (KLI), were sentenced to 18 months in prison for inciting violence in the June 1 attack on a peaceful rally in central Jakarta. Munarman was also convicted of assault for his direct role in the violence. The maximum possible sentences for Rizieq and Munarman were seven and nine years respectively, although prosecutors sought only two years. Interfaith activists who were victims of the violence told POL FSN that they praised the court for making a just decision, although regretting the court did not hand down stiffer sentences.

#### POLICE HANDLE REACTION

[1](#)3. (C) Hundreds of FPI and KLI members--armed with sticks--clashed with the 1500 police providing security immediately following the verdict but were quickly dispersed by police who used batons and tear gas. During the trial, which began in mid-August, FPI oftentimes disrupted court proceedings and harassed witnesses. There are no reports of further tension on the streets as of October 31.

## BACKGROUND OF CASE

14. (C) On June 1, thousands of politicians, artists and religious leaders under the umbrella of the National Alliance for the Freedom of Faith and Religion (AKKBB) had gathered at the National Monument in central Jakarta in sympathy for the Muslim sect Ahmadiyah and to promote religious tolerance. (Note: Sunni orthodox Muslims claim that the Ahmadiyah are not Muslim. The GOI issued a decree earlier this year constraining the group's activities.) Militants viciously attacked the rally with sharp bamboo sticks, injuring 70, including women, children and an elderly man in a wheelchair. Police were caught unawares and did not act to stop the violence immediately. At the orders of the GOI, the police subsequently arrested the two militants and other extremists.

## VERDICT CHILLS HOTHEADS

15. (C) AAKBB Coordinator Anick HT, a victim himself, said he expects the guilty verdict will send a strong message to the FPI to be more cautious, especially with their leader behind bars. In fact, this is the second time that Rizieq, 43, has served time for inciting violence. He was sentenced to seven months in prison in 2003 for leading attacks against nightclubs (Ref B). Following that sentence, FPI was relatively quiet for several years before stepping up its activities again.

16. (C) FPI was originally set up in 1998, offering disillusioned and unemployed young men a purpose through strict Islamic values, martial arts, and vigilante action.

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However, FPI more often acted in support of repressive action by security officials in Jakarta, and were allegedly on police payroll. Police cut ties with FPI after democracy took hold, so FPI turned to extortion to support itself, threatening bars, churches, etc., and those who do not pay protection money. It gained international notoriety for its attempts to "sweep" Americans and others westerners in Jakarta and Central Java in 2001 and 2002, demanding that they leave Indonesia.

17. (C) Munarman is a former moderate human rights leader who suddenly turned militant several years ago, according to those who know him. The 40-year-old lawyer was once a protege of the murdered human rights hero Munir. He was head of the progressive Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation from 2002-2006. His change of heart is a mystery, but his mentors told DepPol/C that Munarman did not feel appreciated for his activism to protect human rights in Aceh and changed heart after attending a workshop run by Muslim radicals. A strident anti-American, Munarman was recently involved in a campaign with belligerent nationalist Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari to shut down the U.S. medical research lab NAMRU-2 and to stop sharing of bird-flu samples with the World Health Organization. He founded the An Nashr Institute whose primary objective was to have the Ahmadiyah banned.

## GOI DESERVES CREDIT

18. (C) Following the June violence, then Criminal Investigations Chief Bambang Hendarso Danuri (recently promoted to National Police Chief) told DepPol/C that the militants would be arrested and that police would put a stop to street violence. There have been no major violent demonstrations in Jakarta since July.

19. (C) The verdict is significant as a sign of the country's desire to curb violent extremism and vigilante hooliganism. This is particularly important in the run-up to the 2009 national elections in which demonstrations are often used to shape the debate. Credit for the prosecutions goes to the Yudhoyono administration which pressed the cases.

